WELLS UNION RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT FOR 1894.

TO THE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WELLS.

JANUARY 18, 1895.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my Annual Report for 1894. Observing the order laid down by the County Council in the Annual Abstracts, I have first to mention

THE GEOLOGY of the District. "Varying from Dolomitic Conglomerate, Carboniferous Limestone, and Lower Lias, to River Gravel, Peat, and Alluvium in various localities, with nearly all these formations in the extensive Out-Parish of Wells," as in former Reports.

OCCUPATION of the Inhabitants; "Chiefly agriculture."

WATER SUPPLY much as reported in former years. As the past summer favoured a good supply, it has not been deficient in quantity, but the quality in some parts of the District leaves much to be desired, especially where it is stored in Pools or Pits; though I should add that the examination of several samples taken from such sources, and the fact that no illness appears to have followed its use, shew that the impurity most probably consists of vegetable matter only.

DRAINAGE.—I may repeat my words of last year that the Drainage for the most part is gradually improving. No general system exists, and such would appear to be difficult of construction in villages with habitations much scattered. The ditches, especially those into which closets drain, require constant care and supervision, particularly in dry weather. In Westbury the Drainage and Water Supply remain as in former Reports, but no repetition of the illness occuring in 1891 has occurred. In October of last year I called the attention of the Authority to the drainage complained of as being defective of houses in the Bath-road, Wells Out-Parish, where there had been recently, and occasionally for several years, outbreaks of disease. I then recommended a thorough inspection by a competent authority of these premises. I am informed that you thereupon desired your Inspector to report, and that he considers the drainage to be satisfactory. I trust no further outbreak will occur.

PREVALENCE OF DISEASE.—*Scarlatina* has appeared occasionally in several parts of the District, though never as an epidemic, being as a rule confined to the houses in which it appeared. Every case has been visited, the premises inspected, printed directions and precautions left, and where necessary, disinfectants have been supplied by your officers at the cost of the Authority. A case of illegal exposure while infected was summoned by order of your Authority, and fined by the Bench of Magistrates. *Measles* have been an epidemic in a part of the District, but no fatal case of either disease has been registered. One case of *Diphtheria*, and two of *Typhoid Fever* have been notified (the latter fatal), and *Whooping Cough* has occurred in four of the parishes: five cases were fatal, chiefly infants. Five cases of deaths from *Consumption* have been registered, and five from injuries. Sixteen inquests have been held (the majority at the Asylum)—One suicide, five accidents, ten natural causes. No death from *Diarrhœa* has occurred, and the cases of sickness from this disease have been fewer than usual. The death-rate for the year is but 12.87; the zymotic rate is only 0.18: the infant mortality 2.46 per 1000 population, and 111.58 per 1000 births.

A house to house inspection has been thoroughly carried out in several of the parishes. I have gone through the Report of the Inspector as to several of

he localities, notably Walton and West Pennard, and have visited with him and reported upon some of the cases requiring immediate attention. These cases, the Inspector informs me, have been remedied, but much remains to be done. There can be no doubt that a great general improvement will be effected if the powers vested in you by the Act are carried out by you firmly, if gradually, and with due consideration.

I cannot conclude this part of my report without bearing testimony to the efficient and exhaustive manner in which those Reports of the No. 2 District Inspection have been compiled. Those of District No. 1 are in progress: they have not as yet been examined by me.

There is no *Sanitary Hospital* in the District.

The Sanitary Authority does not possess any public *Disinfecting Apparatus.*

Slaughter-houses, &c., have been inspected. (See Inspectors' reports).

Overcrowding.—I have no special report to make. The cases I have visited have been remedied. The Birth rate for the year is 22.04 per 1000, and the Death rate 12.87 per 1000.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

H. W. LIVETT.

REPORTS & SUMMARIES of the INSPECTORS OF NUISANCES.

No. 1 DISTRICT.

I beg to send my annual report for the Upper District of Wells Rural Authority, which, I think, will compare favourably with other years in the general healthy and cleanly state of the District.

Four cases of overcrowding and dirty houses were reported. Two have been given up by the families and thoroughly cleansed; the others are still living in the houses, but some of the family have left.

Three dilapidated houses have been condemned as not fit for habitation, and six cases of improper drainage have been brought to the notice of the Authority, the defects in the latter cases have been remedied on application to owners.

The Slaughter Houses in the District are generally in good order.

In my house to house inspection I find little fault with the general constrnction of the buildings. There is no regular system of drainage; on the whole it is sufficient for the isolated situation of the greater part of the cottages. Water is very good and abundant, but in many cases there is a want of closet accommodation, one having to supply the needs of three or four families. On application, the owners have remedied these defects.

I append a summary of the several cases in report:

Overcrowding and Dirty Houses (remedied)	4
Improper Drainage (remedied)	10
Do. Closet Accommodation	6
Houses not fit for Habitation	3
Deposit of Offensive Matter	3

STUCKEY FRITH,

Inspector.

No. 2 DISTRICT.

General Work.

During the Year the ordinary routine wotk of the inspection of the District has received my constant attention.

Notices served to abate ordinary nuisances, such as foul and choked drains, foul privies, cesspits, piggeries, &c. (exclusive of a great number dealt with by verbal notice) **58**

Cases of infected dwellings, occupiers served with notices as to isolation and disinfection and dwellings disinfected and fumigated as directed by Medical Officer of Health (disinfectants supplied by the Authority) ... **11**

Unwholesome and dilapidated dwellings, notices served on owners and occupiers to cleanse and repair **21**

Certificate issued for occupation of new dwelling **1**

Over-crowded dwelling dealt with **1**

Unburied putrid carcases of animals **2**

Samples of water submitted to Medical Officer of Health ... **5**

Bakehouse and slaughter houses inspected **19**

Outlets of common sewers cleansed by the order of Authority ... **3**

Notices served by the Authority to abate pollution of mill stream at Baltonsborough by closets and foul drainage discharging thereinto ... **10**

Housing of the Working Classes.

Further house to house inspections have been made during the year of the dwellings of the working classes, under the "Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890." The parishes of Butleigh, Walton, Sharpham, and West Pennard have been inspected and reports thereon prepared and submitted to the Sanitary Authority and to the Medical Officer of Health, giving full particulars of the number and condition of the dwellings, number of inmates, living and sleeping accommodation, ventilation, drainage, water supply, closet accommodation, disposal of refuse, live stock, and other information relating to the sanitation of the dwellings.

A considerable number of defects pointed out in the reports have been dealt with under the direction of the Authority and many other improvements are either in progress or are still under their consideration.

The number of dwellings inspected and reported on are as follows:

Butleigh	143
Walton	81
Sharpham	16
West Pennard	131
Total	371

EDWIN H. PADFIELD,
Inspector of Nuisances,
District No. 2, Wells R. S. A.